#### SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS DEON GURRENT TOPICS-COMPILED MYRRY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

Poverty and Misery at the South.

From the St. Louis Republican. Numerous accounts from the Southern States oncur in representing the destitution among The people as already, thus early in the season, having reached a degree of suffering and want that is something terrible. A well-informed sorrespondent of this paper, who traveled through large portions of Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi, describes the condition there as, in many places, very deplerable. The planters, it may be said of all of them, are bankrupt. Not one of them has made his expenses the last year. In Northern Mississippi many of them, being unable to meet their obligations, have been sold out by the Sheriff, and are utterly impoverished. In Alabama the case is much the same. In some sections the crops have been unremunerative, and the planters have been unable to pay their hands; nothing was done in the cotton fields, many freedmen were unemployed-many of them from necessity, saying nothing of the many who preferred idleness to industry. From Arkansas and Louisiana there comes up great cry of want and suffering.

Affairs in that stricken country are complicated and made more critical by reason of its negro population. The negroes suffer as well as the whites, and it is something which, now they are free, they cannot comprehend.
Always, heretofore, provided profusely with
the necessaries of life, and expecting that
emancipation would feed and clothe them
even more abundantly, they wonder and shake their heads that everything should be reversed—and that, instead of being better, they are vastly worse off than they were before. What it means they cannot understand; and many of them can easily be made to believe the worst. Driven by want, partly the effect of their own idleness, but chiefly, perhaps, owing to circumstances which neither white nor black can control, they resort to theft and robbing to supply their wants. It is, therefore, not surprising that we have reports of their "robbing and plun-dering throughout the country," killing sheep to feed upon, and entering houses to rob them of food and clothing. In Arkansas, a grand jury of one of the largest counties has made a presentation of these outrages, and called on the military authorities for protection. Fears are entertained of a negro insurrection. Probably a general rising of the negroes, intent apon universal robbery, burning and mas-sacre, aimed at the property and lives of the whites, is the only calamity which would be really much worse than the distressing state of things which exists at the South already.

And now what will be done with a view to relieve this distress and prevent the calamities which are so imminent? If we could make this appeal to the President, we should have no doubt of his answer. Immediately measures would be taken to show the misled negroes, and especially the white desperadoes who are misleading them, that they cannot proceed in the line apparently marked out for them with impunity. The military would be used, not to countenance the lawlessness and violence which are so rampant at the South, but to repress outrage and wrong-doing. At the same time measures would be taken to provide, in a judicious way, for the wants of both black and white. But we should in vain appeal to Congress. That body is frightfully insensible and reckless as to the condition of things at the South. Some of its members may well be accused of a desire to revive the horrors of San Domingo at the South. Such men nourish only deadly passions of hatred and revenge; and would be glad to see the South a desert. Stevens, But-Ier, Ashley, Logan, and others of their stamp, are urging policies against the South which lay them open to this charge. Unless the people of the North speak in such thunder tones of rebuke as shall frighten this Congress from its present designs against the South, that section of the country is in danger of becoming a veritable "howling wilderness," or relapsing into the original jungle and den of wild beasts from which it sprung.

#### Colored Suffrage in New York. From the N. Y. Tribune.

A correspondent asks us "in what year suffrage was conferred on negroes in the State of New York; what was the complexion of the Legislature, and who was Gov-

Under the first and second Constitutions, or from 1788 to 1823, there was no distinction of color in qualifications for voters; there was a property qualification affecting equally both whites and blacks; all a negro had to possess more than a white man was papers or other Batisfactory evidence that he was a free personand not a slave-slaves, of course, did not vote. The men of the Revolution never doubted the free negro's right to the ballot. But in 1821 a convention was called to revise the Constitution, and then came the clamor of rich versus poor, and a grand movement in favor of abolishing all manner of property qualifications was inaugurated and successfully carried through so far as white men were concerned; but a colored man was required to possess a freehold estate of \$250, to be three years an inhabitant of the State, and for the last year of the election district in which he voted. This Constitution was adopted by a vote of 74,732 against 41,402. The Constitution was again revised in 1846, but the rather feeble effort made to place colored voters on the same basis with whites met with very little favor-the only modification being on the minor point of residence. That Constitution funder which we now are) was adopted by 221,528 against 92,436.

It cannot be fairly charged that any party as parties now are, is entirely responsible for this invidious discrimination. Attempts have been made to remedy the injustice through the only legal path-amending the Constitution-but thus far without success. The yote in 1846 was 85,406 for, and 224,336 against; in 1860 there were 197,503 in favor, and 337,984

opposed.

The question is naturally up again in the present Convention, and may in due time come before the people; but past experience gives little hope for the friends of impartial suffrage. In the votes noted above, the Democratic party conspicuously opposed the repeal of the property qualification; a few, doubtless, voted the right way, but where one Democrat voted "yes," probably ten Republicans voted "no." "yes," probably ten Republicans voted "no." Our Senators and Assemblymen have had no direct voice in the matter; the most they could do was to favor the submitting of the question to the people. Whenever that has been proposed the Republicans (and before them the Whige) have pretty generally favored such submission, while the Democrats have almost Emmimounly gone the other way.

And the second second second second

From the N. Y. World. We clip the following from the Tribune:-"As a greenback is a United States note, and not the note of a bank, it lacks one of the elements essential to the safety of any banking system in which the notes are to be passed into circulation, in discounting the notes of private parties, viz: that the notes shall be issued at the risk of the bank, not of the Government."

By "the safety of any banking system," the Tribune evidently means the security for the redemption of paper money loaned to the community by the banks. But how is the security of a national bank note better than the security for a greenback? We suppose the Tribune would say it is better because only the Government is responsible for the greenbacks, while the property of the bank issuing it is liable for the note. The idea is, that both the property of the bank and the resources of the Government are pledged to the holder of the notes, who has thus a double security. This is fanciful. The security of the holder is neither greater nor less, but precisely the same, whether he possesses greenbacks or bank notes. His sole recourse is to the Government in both cases. The property of the bank is no security to him; it is only a security to the Government, which pays the circulating notes of a bank failing to redeem them. When a bank fails the Government redeems its notes at once without waiting to dispose of any of the bank property. It is presumed that the deposited bonds will in most cases be ample to reimburse the Government; but if they should prove insufficient, the Government has a prior and paramount lien on the other assets of the bank. This being the law,

the Tribune's argument breaks down. It seems to us a more honest preceeding for a bank to loan actual money, which has cost it something, than to receive interest from the community on its own notes, which cost it nothing. Why should a wealthy farmer, who is so solvent and solid that his equally wealthy neighbor indorses his note for nothing, make a mulual exchange of promises to pay with a bank, and pay the bank seven per cent? The tarmer is just as good for all his liabilities as the bank is for its. Why then would there not be as much equity in the bank paying him seven per cent. for the pos-session of his note, as in his paying seven per cent. for the notes of the bank? It is as far from my house to yours as it is from yours to mine. Why are not the farmer's promises to pay entitled to be treated as money just as

much as the bank's ? The answer will be, that the bank promises to pay on demand, but the borrower not till a atipulated day, and the seven per cent. is a compensation for this constant liability. This is in fact the only real difference; the solvency of the parties being equal, and the things ex-changed being as like as a bushel of wheat raised on one farm is to a bushel of wheat raised on another. So long as specie payments remain suspended, and what is called the loaning of money is the mere exchange of paper promises against other paper promises, why should the knots of men who compose the banking associations have this great advantage over their fellow-citizens? If, under such circumstances, there must be an income from the circulation of promissory notes, the profit ought to be fairly distributed among the whole community. The only practicable method of distribution is to confine this advantage to the notes of the Government, thus saving to the people what is now taken from them by the banks in the mutual exchanges of equally valuable promissory notes of equally solvent

## More Reconstruction Legislation.

rom the Louisville Courier. Old Thad. Stevens has introduced a bill in Congress to so amend the Reconstruction laws that the constitutions may be declared carried by a majority of those actually voting. We are not surprised at this. We expected it. There is no deviltry that the miserable old miscegenation leader is not capable of, and no extreme too great for the radical Congressmen where the interests of their party, and consequently their own, are involved.

In fixing up the first Reconstruction act the purpose of the radical leaders was to radicalize the Southern States by subjecting them to negro domination, but their skill proved not at all commensurate with their malevolence. If they had known how to make their work perfect they would have done it; but as they were not possessed of sufficient sagacity for that, they had to wait until the defect was made apparent, and then they applied themselves again to the task, and after an infinite amount of consultation and discussion, for which the people were roundly taxed, brought forth an amendatory Reconstruction bill.

They flattered themselves the job was now complete-that not a nail was left undriven, not a chink unclosed. The job was superintended by Thad, Stevens, and as his journeymen, Boutwell, Logan, and the rest, put in the last licks, he hugged himself with devilish glee. But it turns out, after all, that the thing was badly done. The wickedness of Satan entered into the business, but not his wisdom. Thad. Stevens and his followers are compelled again to mend their job.

After all that has been done in the way of 'reconstruction'' by the Jacobin Congressmen, they now see that they cannot get the ten States into the Union with their negro constructed constitutions under the acts as they stand. Under these acts no constitutions can be considered as adopted unless voted for by a majority of the registered voters, and the elections for the conventions prove, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that in some of the States at all events such a majority cannot be obtained. Those of the real citizens who were permitted to do so very generally registered, but when the time came for voting at the illegal elections, they, as a rule, scorned to have anything to do with them; still, under the arrangement made by Congress, they must be taken into the computation in deciding whether the constitutions are adopted. In the enforcement of their infamous policy, it becomes necessary now to enact another reconstruction bill, providing that the constitutions shall be carried by a majority of those actually participating in the elections. Were ever stupidity and malevolence so intimately blended

If there were any sense of decency left among the Congressional Jacobins, they would now give the whole affair up as a bad job; but they will not do it. What is said of old Thad. Stevens will be verified either by him or one of his under-strikers. We have very little doubt that this bill will pass both Houses of Congress. The bringing in of the Southern States as proposed is a necessity for the radical party, and the leaders are fully aware of The Presidential election is coming on. By the aid of the electoral votes of the ten Southern States the radicals hope to succeed, and thus perpetuate their ascendancy in the nation. Without these votes they know the Democracy are sure to get in their candidate. Therefore it is that they adhere with such dogged tenscity to the reconstruction scheme, despite the unmistakable indication of popular disapproval constantly brought to their notice. Therefore it is that they will be found willing

to incur additional censure by proceeding still further in their usurpation and wrong. On other points the Jacobins show themselves not insensible to the opinions of the people; but they are driven to the desperate strait of pushing forward the measure which has more than all others turned the people against

The radical party is doomed. No reconstruction legislation, past or prospective, can save it. The party which deliberately resorts to usurpation, despotism, and negro supremacy to perpetuate its power, cannot survive among ople who have any love of freedom or pride of race. The attempt to defeat the will of the United States by usurping the power to negroize ten States, will go far towards uniting all the white voters against those guilty of it. No Northern man who is true to himself can take part with those who propose to control the nation by means of negro votes.

## Wages and Hours of Labor,

From the N. Y. Tribune. Congress is righteously bent on retrenching the national expenditures, and everybody says that is just what ought to be. But when we come to details, all who have established relations of suction with the Federal Treasury naturally cry out-"Not here! not here! flourish your broom somewhere else!" The Department clerks want their "twenty per cent. extra" for another year, though many elements of living are far lower than they have been; new railroads press for grants and guarantees; Secretary Welles wants fortyseven millions wherewith to run the navy in a time of profound peace, when the whole Gov-ernment used to be run for a fourth of that sum, within the recollection of most of us. Of course, he won't get it. But we are startled when we read that Congress, after resolving to retrench earnestly in this quarter, has re-coiled, and concluded to let the workmen in the Navy Yard be kept on two months longer, because work is scarce, and times hard outside. In other words, the Government is to pay money it has not, for work that it don't want, in order to keep certain persons em-ployed in the Navy Yards who apprehend that they could find no work-or none to their lik ng-elsewhere.

Against this and all kindred schemes for pauperizing labor, we firmly protest. No true man will wish to be kept at work under such circumstances. If he is to be a pauper, let him be a pauper outright-not a pauper in disguise. And keeping a man at work, not because you need his work, but because he needs the pay for it, is pauperizing him-making him a dependant, a parasite, a hanger-on, instead of an independent, self-subsisting freeman.

It seems to us that the time has fairly come for giving the eight-hour system a fair trial by common consent. That is to say:—There being too little work in the cities and most of the manufacturing districts to employ all who are willing to work ten hours per day, let the day's work be reduced to eight hours with corresponding pay. If this were done, tens of thousands of families would be saved from destitution otherwise inevitable.

We never believed nor taught that ten hours' pay could be given or exacted for eight hours' work. We have never been confident that the time had yet arrived when eight hours' work per day from those who work at all would suffice. Yet, since the progress of invention, of machinery, of economizing forces, is so rapid and constant, the time must surely come wherein eight hours' work per day will produce more than twelve hours' work per day once did, or than ten hours' work per day now do. May we not now begin to consider when this result is to be attained?

Human wants multiply and expand with the means of gratifying them. The mechanic of 1867 wears clothes that a king would have esteemed too fine, too costly, a few centuries ago. If he spends nothing for alcoholic drinks and other baneful indulgencies, he may soon surround himself with furniture, books, prints, etc. etc., that a nobleman would once have envied. But may he not wisely prefer to live more frugally, less lavishly, than he does, and enjoy more leisure? When labor shall produce twice its present average product, may not the laboring classes wisely prefer to fare less sumptuously and tax their powers less severely, and enjoy more of the society of their families and friends-more leisure for moral and intellectual improvement?

It does seem to us that it would be wise and proper, by way of experiment, to retrench the hours of labor for the next two or three months, and thus afford a chance of employment to thousands who must otherwise stand idle and go hungry. When spring opens, bringing a large increase of employment on every side, it will be time to consider whether to persist in working short-time for corresponding wages, or go back to ten hours and the old wages, if these can be had. But the prospect now is that labor in cities must be cheaper henceforth, or there must be a vast migration from the cities and manufacturing communities to the interior and the West-a great diversion of human effort from the workshops and the factories to the improvement and cultivation of the soil.

## A Contest Not to be Given Up.

From the Pittsburg Commercial. Something like one hundred millions of dollars is lost to the Treasury every year by the whisky frauds. We hear little of similar frauds by shoe, iron, and other manufacturers, and we presume that on them the law is enforced. Can there be a reasonable excuse given for not collecting the whisky tax to the last dollar, and thereby correspondingly relieve the necessaries from taxation? The relief from taxation asked for by manufacturers who recently met in Convention is equal to about \$150,000,000. At least one-half of this might be made up from whisky. We perceive that the chairman of the whisky men has been called on for his views as to the best way to collect the tax. This looks odd, to say the least, and is likely to result in nothing beneficial to the revenue. The first and second years of the tax the revenue was collected with a tolerable degree of honesty, as the figures show. It would appear that better brains are employed in de-vising ways to defraud the reve-nue than there are in administering the law. Clearly this being so, the need is better brains on the side of the Government. It would be a sad thing to admit that fraud can beat the Government in securing talent, and that it thus wins the day. If it indeed be true that the revenue from whisky has fallen off in consequence of fraud, Congress cannot give up the contest, but is bound to continue it with increased determination. There are good reasons for suspecting that the trouble begins at Washington. The testimony of Commissioner Rollins is instructive on this point. Millions of revenue, he says, have been lost by putting good men out and bad men in office. If there are to be any more investigating committees, this testimony is highly suggestive. The penalties are in no manner equal to the offense. Let them be increased to an extent that will make the fraude so

perilous that even bad men will hesitate to take the risk. If the result should be that revenue and whisky both are driven out of existence, the Covernment and humanity would be immensely the gainer.

Ashley's Record. From the Washington Express.

Impeachment is dead, but the impeacher still live. The "Head Centre" of the ring, J. M. Ashley, of Ohio, declares in a complimentary letter to his constituents that in what he did he meant well to his party and his country, that his honor is untarnished, and that it is not worth while, for Republicans at least, to quarrel with him or with those who agree with him. He says:-

"For aiding the assassination investigation in my own way and at my own expense, I am as-sailed in a most discreditable manner by Re-publican journals, and charged with an attempt to use the testimony of convicted felous to impeach Mr. Johnson. I have no apology or excuse to offer for anything I have said or done officially. All I ask is to be judged by the public record I have made.

J. M. ASHLEY,"

This last is the very kernel in the nut. Mr.

Ashley is judged by his public record, and by it is condemned. He did labor to involve the President of the United States in the assassination plot. He did connive with a penitentiary witness to convict the President of the horrible crime of murdering Mr. Lincoln. He did visit and proffer conditional aid and comfort to this villain-and now that aid has failed, and two-thirds of his party call him a madman or a fool-including, as he says, many of the original impeachers-he appeals to his constituents to relieve him from an odium which will last long as he lives, even if it does not follow his memory beyond the grave.

#### Political Reminiscences.

From the Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, Mr. Thurlow Weed is too old and prominent a politician, and has trod upon too many people's corns, to be let alone by them. It has been said that to have devoted friends and bitter enemies is the test of intellectual force and merit. Judged by this standard, Mr. Weed is a most remarkable man, and not the least remarkable act of his whole life was his return to the editorial harness in the evening of a long life, and the wonderfully vigorous manner in which he defends himself against all manner of assailants. He has shown that he is an ugly customer to deal with, even yet: and his political reminiscences, of which he has so rich a store, and which make so inte-resting a feature of the New York Commercial Advertiser, contain many valuable disclosures with regard to the recent political history of our country, and not unfrequently are the author's best vindication.

Mr. Weed is now the oldest of the prominent participants in the political affairs of the country, and being withal unimpaired in his mental vigor, it would be very desirable that he should devote the ripeness of his old age to the preparation of a careful and deliberate autobiography. Such a work would be the most valuable legacy he could leave to his country, and the most enduring monument of himself. We hope it may be done, if for no other purpose than to silence the misconceptions and slanders which have become current concerning various points of political history during the war.

Commenting on which, the New York Commercial Advertiser (T. W.'s organ) has the following:-

The friend who sends this too flattering article inquires whether the suggestion of an 'Autobiography'' is likely to be acted upon? Similar suggestions and inquiries have reached us from numerous friendly sources, several of which seem so earnest, that if we were as sure of the soundness of their judgment as of the warmth of their friendship, we should be tempted, distrustful as we are of our fitness for the work, to undertake it. We hesitate. because we think that when men publish their personal histories, they ought to have a history. And ours seems too commonplace and uneventful to render an attempt to invest it with public interest either sensible or safe. And yet some highly intelligent friends insist that a large amount of material for history, in our possession, ought to be worked up. Indeed we were "almost persuaded" to commence it two years ago, when the following

letter was received :-"New York, April 21, 1868.-Dear Sir:-I read a little faster than I recovered vision, your very interesting 'Letters from Europe,' which well deserve a place in every American's library. This is my candid judgment, independent of the frequent mention in the book, with honor, of my name. Two paragraphs, near the close of the book, describing your first entrance into New York, remind one of Frank-lin's entrance into Philadelphia, and excite the hope that you may favor the world with a full blography. I can't expect to live long enough to read the work; but you can give it the power of exciting thousands of smart boys to conquer difficulties in the career of distinguished usefuiness. With great esteem, yours truly, "WINFIELD SCOTT.

"Thurlow Weed, Esq."

That we possess a mine of political and literary wealth is quite certain. We are fortunate in a daughter whose least merit consists in the care taken of manuscripts, all of which, of the slightest value or interest, for more than forty years, have been thoughtfully preserved. To thirty-five bound volumes of Letters, more than two thousand Letters, arranged alphabetically and filed, are added. Among them are the Letters of De Witt Clinton, Ambrose Spencer, James and William Kent, Charles G. Haines, Generals Peter B. Porter (Senior and Junior), Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, William H. Seward, Albert H. Tracy, William H. Maynard, Francis Granger, Gulian C. Verplanck, the brothers John A., Charles, and Edward King, the Rev. Dr. Nott, Father Mathew, John L. Stevens (the traveller), Mathew, John L. Stevesson Irving, Cor-Hamilton Fish, Washington Irving, Cor-Washington Hunt, Zachariah Taylor, Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Whittlesey, Edward Ellice (the "greatest English Commoner"), Governor "greatest English Commoner"), Governor Andrew, American Ministers C. F. Adams, Edward L. Dayton, John Bigelow, H. S. San-ford, A. Burlingame, R. H. Pruyn, Rufus King, Rev. Edward Mitchell, of New York (fifty years ago), Archbishopa Hughes and Purcell, Father de Smet, "Honest" John Davis, of Massachusetts, William L. Marcy, Abbot Lawrence, Millard Fillmere, George Law, Edwin Croswell, Governors Vance, Corwin, Dennison, and Elisha Whittlesey of Ohio, William Duane, John Binns, Josiah Randall, John Sargeant, and William C. Carey of Philadelphia, William Wirt, Geerge Peabody, John McLean (when P. M. G.), William L. Stone, Joseph Gales, John C. Spencer, Erastus Root, Solomon Southwick, Philo C. Fuller, Horace Greeley, H. T. Raymond, Edward Curtis, M. H. Grinnell, R. M. Blatchford, James Bowen, Philip Hone, M. M. Noah, J. Watson Webb, Robert B. Minturn, Simeon Draper, S. S. Gouveneur, John Armstrong, Jr., Addison Gardiner, Judge Shipman, Truman Smith, John M. Clayton, William M. Meredith, Reverdy Johnson, Ambrose L. Jordan, Ogden Hoffman, Robert Emmet, James Tallmadge, General Scott, General Worth, Charles L. Livingston, Charles P. Clinch, Coram A. Worth, Admirals Farra-

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